THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

Vol. VI. *Philadelphia, Saturday, December* 3, 1808. No. 23.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

LETTER LVI.

(*Continued from page* 340.)

Mr. Simonde has followed the course of Adam Smith in a very useful work, and has ventured to differ very successfully from that distinguished writer on some important heads. He is composing a history of the Italian republicks of the middle ages. Natural history, natural philosophy, metaphysicks, chymistry, botany and the different branches of the mathematicks are cultivated and professed by distinguished characters. Professour Prevost, with whom I am particularly acquainted, has published a translation of Euripides, two volumes on the faculties of the human mind, and several smaller productions: when his country was threatened by Montesquieu, he bore arms in the ranks, and as long as it was possible to keep alive the flame of patriotism, his efforts as a writer and a man of letters were not wanting; but he submits with a good grace to the present order of things, and is satisfied with what it is no longer possible to prevent. Another of my old friends Mr. de Vegobre has published a small volume in which he has recorded many of the melancholy events of 1793, and particularly such as regarded Naville one of the most interesting victims of that frightful period, and it is to be wished that some man of letters like him, of unblemished character, would take the same trouble every eight or ten years, and prevent, as far as his influence extended, all possibility of that oblivion of the past which too easily creeps upon the human mind. Those days of degradation both in France and Geneva ought never to be forgotten; I like the spirit and sensibility of Laharpe, who declares that they remain present to his eyes, that they weigh upon his heart, and that the best and last employment of his pen shall be to retrace them for the bene-

fit of posterity. The names of Bonnet and de Saussure are both familiar to you. They were men of large fortune, who devoted their lives to the cultivation of letters: the last, whose attention seems to have turned to every branch of literature, was the discoverer of a singular little animal whose increase takes place by a division of its body into two completely formed individuals, and who is in that respect perhaps the best emblem of immortality to be met with. I have on a former occasion brought you acquainted with the family of Huber, and Mr. Necker, of whom I have already said so much, and who have done honour to Geneva. Of his political works and of their tendency, posterity alone can judge, they were unquestionably written with the best intentions, but had in all probability the bad effect of promoting a fermentation which it might have been foreseen, that no human influence could afterwards allay,—his last recommends a particular form of government, which is likely I am told, to be the one hereafter adopted by Bonaparte. His moral discourses contain a great deal of good advice, adapted to every age and to all the various stations of life, they are composed, however, I think, in too pompous a style. He has chosen to call them sermons, and has affixed a text to each, but though he inculcates in the strongest terms a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being and a reliance on that superiour wisdom and goodness which regulates the decrees of providence, yet he nowhere directs our attention to the doctrines and mysteries of revealed religion, or expresses himself otherwise than as a philosopher of ancient times might have done. His posthumous works have been collected into one volume, and published by Mad. de Stael, whose eloquence and active sensibility, appear perfectly well directed in drawing the attention of mankind to the merit of the best of fathers. It is such a monument as Tullia might have raised to the memory of her father had she survived him. I could perceive however that the literary world had been in the expectation of something better, and that there was but one opinion as to the far greater number of the maxims and definitions which make a part of the volume. They are such as may very well have occurred to one who had lived long in the world, but scarcely such as a man of letters would risk his reputation upon. I could have wished too that there had been more of narrative and less of eulogy, and that we had been made better acquainted with the life of Mr. Necker in his earlier years. Dr. Franklin's memoirs might have afforded an excellent model on the occasion. From the situation of a clerk at 15*l.* a year to that of a prime minister of France the transition is so great, that there must have been much merit and many lucky chances, and had Mad. de Stael condescended to follow the chain of events and thus unravel the fortunes of her father, she would have commanded universal attention, and have rendered a service to mankind. The banker whom he first lived with in Paris, came into his counting-house one morning, and reproached the clerks, that not one of them was able to translate a letter for him out of Dutch. About six weeks afterwards Mr. Necker, till then an unnoticed young man in the herd of clerks, came forward, and declaring his acquisition of the Dutch language, requested and obtained, that the correspondence from Holland should be hereafter entrusted to him. He was afterwards a partner in the celebrated house of Thelasson, and acquired a large fortune in the banking business, which is carried on in France in a way not yet, I believe, understood in America. It consists in finding bills of exchange for money and money for bills of exchange on any part of Europe, and in transferring stock from one fund to another on the most advantageous terms; so great was Mr. Necker's sagacity on this subject that he is said to have annually made a large sum to the last year of his life, without moving from his elbow chair.

He has often declared, that nothing had for a long period of his life appeared easier to him than to become immensely rich, if such had been the object of his ambition. The volume closes with a tale which is drawn from common life, and is on that account the more interesting. Mad. de Genlis has proved in her Thelesmar and Alphonso, that the wonder and astonishment of the reader might be as well excited by the relation of what is strictly within the verge of truth and possibility, as by the wildest fictions of romance, and the object of Mr. Necker was to show, that as interesting a narrative might be composed from the circumstances of ordinary life, and from the endearments of married love, as from all that could be invented even by the brilliant imagination of Madame de Stael. Had he been as deeply read in novels as you and I are, he would have known, that the same idea had already occurred to Fielding and to Miss Burney, whose account of Mr. Harrel, of his want of conduct, of his wife's indifference, and insensibility of the expedients by which a disclosure of their circumstances is from time to time kept off a little longer, and of their final ruin is by far the most interesting part of her principal work. In the novel of Mr. Necker a country gentleman of generous mind and amiable manners marries a lady of exalted merit whom he passionately loves, and who has preferred him to the most brilliant connexions. They are situated on the paternal estate, in a beautiful country, and are blest with a daughter who unites all their affections. But unfortunately the husband had been led into habits of expense by expectations which are not realized, he finds it difficult to retrench, and equally so to impart the truth of his embarrassments to his wife, who suspects what she does not venture to inquire into, and is secretly unhappy. Accidental business carries him to London; he is there on the lookout for some speculation by which he might rapidly become immensely rich, and thinks himself fortunate in the acquaintance of a broker, who is said to have retrieved the affairs of several gentlemen; who being embarrassed, had placed them in his hands. He is dazzled at the prospect of a speculation in the funds; is led on by the success of two or three trifling attempts, and encouraged by the punctuality of the broker, now become his agent, to venture more and more, till, in order to prevent the trouble of frequent meetings and letters to that purpose, he in a fatal moment, delivers a number of promissory notes with blanks for the sums they are to be filled up with, and retires to his house in the country, not without some dismal forebodings what might be the event.—Symptoms of the truth now rapidly occur, and it is soon evident that the broker had been long a man of desperate fortune; that he had pledged the means of his employer to the utmost; that total ruin and disgrace would ensue; that his creditors had been alarmed, and that the unfortunate gentleman would in a short time be dragged to prison. The lady, who had long dreaded the worst, and had lamented nothing more than her husband's unwillingness to share his griefs with her, now offers him the most delightful of all consolations; she offers to share his fortune, be it what it may, and no expression of reproach is in contradiction to the smile of love which beams upon her countenance. But his pride, and a strong sense of the happiness he had thrown away, render life loathsome to him; he declares his dreadful purpose of suicide, and she determines not to survive him. They recommend their child to a friend whom they can depend upon; and while this dear object of their united affections, who had been soliciting her father for the new doll he had promised her, is running about the garden, they resolutely execute their purpose with a pair of pistols, and die in each other's arms. The moral of this little story is excellent, but the termination is too dismal: it would have been better, I think, to have

brought religion to the aid of the unhappy couple; who submitting to their fate with resignation, might have cheerfully withdrawn to some cottage, and subsisted by their own industry. A delightful picture of a retired and blameless life, might now have been drawn; and, as they were seated by their fire side, on a winter's evening, with their daughter between them, a messenger might have thundered at the door, with the news of some rich and generous uncle, just arrived from the East Indies; or some hard-hearted maiden aunt with an immense fortune, might have been made to die for the occasion, without giving her time to make her will. The same tenderness of affection which induced Mr. Necker to render the days of his wife as happy as the unavoidable evils of human nature admit of, continued to animate his exertions to the last moments of her existence. The gloomy period which we all shudder at, was softened by his assiduous attention; her mind was composed by the certainty that her wishes with respect to the disposal of her remains, would be complied with; and musick, either from the hand of her daughter, or from a band in a neighbouring chamber, was heard whenever she seemed to request it; and was made to sooth the long and painful approach of death. I have often thought, that with all our love for each other in this world, there was something not well understood in our conduct towards those of our friends who are on the verge of their last moments; and that the art of promoting an easy, and I might almost say, a cheerful death, was not sufficiently attended to. A book has been written upon this subject in the French language; but for want of knowing the title, I have never been able to procure it.

Mr. de Luc, who has been so distinguished in the literary world, and in particular for his improved application of the barometer to the measurement of heights, is also of Geneva, though he has principally resided in England; where he bears the title of reader to the Queen. His works on the history of the earth extend to several volumes, which are replete with a variety of observations, made in almost every part of Europe, on such circumstances and phenomena, as prove the portion of the globe which we inhabit, to have been formerly covered by the waters of some great ocean, that has been since suddenly withdrawn; and on such as are connected with the changes it has undergone by the operation of volcanick fire. He is also the inventor of another very simple experiment, for the measurement of heights by the greater or less degree of thermometrical heat of water, exposed to the action of fire; at which ebullition commences: if we reflect a moment, that the process of ebullition is the overcoming the incumbent pressure of a column of air, it will immediately occur to us, that the column being rendered shorter at every step we ascend, its weight must consequently become less, and be more easily overcome. Monsieur de Saussure, with a liberality which did him infinite honour, spared no trouble or expense which could enable him to ascertain the truth of this hypothesis, and has given us the result of various experiments on the sea shore, on Mount Cenis, and on Mount Blanc. It appears from these, that although the difficulty of kindling and keeping up a flame increased as he ascended, and was almost insurmountable on Mount Blanc, yet the difference of height to be presumed in all these instances, from the different temperature of the water at the moment of ebullition, was in exact ratio to the difference of level at every particular station; such as it had been ascertained by the barometer, and by trigonometrical experiments.

The works of M. de Luc, though long known to the scientifick world, were new to me; and I was particularly struck with his hypothesis on the nature of heat. The Creator condescending, if I may use the expression, to act always by secondary causes, has willed, that in

this atmosphere we breathe, in the earth, and in every object of creation, there should exist a variety of invisible materials, which we are enabled to call into action at pleasure, and to give a direction to—it is so with the magnetick and galvanick powers, and with the electrick fluid, and so with the element of heat; or, as I believe I should call it, calorick. This important element, this great vivifier of creation, is composed of materials which gravitate towards the earth, and accumulate upon its surface; it exists more or less in all bodies; it is more easily absorbed and transmitted by some substances than by others; it may be called into action in various ways; by friction, for example, and by the rays of the Sun: which last may be supposed to operate more efficaciously in the plain, where the gravitating particles of heat are more condensed, than on elevated places; without, however, containing any more of the substance of heat, than a knife with which you cut an orange does of juice; and if you ever complain of their being hot, I shall set you right, as Jack Lizard did his mamma, when she complained of having burnt her fingers. The theory of M. de Luc has met with some opposition, but has been rather confirmed than not by a course of atmospherical experiments, made by an ingenious natural philosopher of Geneva. He found indeed, the degree of heat greater at a certain distance from the earth, than upon the surface; but the continued exhalation which we know to exist there, and the effect of moisture in absorbing heat, very easily explain that circumstance.

Another of this last mentioned gentleman's experiments* shows the effect of a mass of ice at one extremity of a room, upon a thermometer at the other. It was natural that the thermometer should sink as the heat of the room was absorbed by the melting of the ice, but this he has chosen to call the reflection of cold, and to reason upon it as upon some unknown property; as well might he call the action of a spunge upon a table, where water had been spilt, the reflection of dryness; and he might have recollected, what he must have observed a hundred times in his excursions to the glaciers, that the protrusion of ice into the valley has the effect of impeding the growth of every plant in its neighbourhood, by absorbing, as it gradually melts during the summer, that heat which is so necessary to vegetation.

The learned men of Geneva, though in general communicative, yet reminded me sometimes of the Druids of old; they seemed fearful lest the fruit of their investigations should be too easily understood, and science become too common; and their admission of such a difficulty as the reflection of cold, which they condescend gravely to discuss, is not unlike the conduct of Sir Roger de Coverley, who confessed, when an old man, that he used sometimes, in the vigour of youth, and in his zeal for hunting, to collect as many of the foxes of the neighbourhood as possible, that he might have the pleasure of running them down upon his own manor. Another Mr. de Luc, a brother of the one abovementioned, resides in Geneva, and has often given me occasion to admire the rare reunion of an attachment to scientifick pursuits, with cheerful piety, an active mind, and 75 years of age. His Cabinet of Natural History is allowed by those who can best appreciate such things, to be extremely well composed; and it is particularly interesting, from the circumstance of its containing several marine and other fossils, which evidently belong to species now existing in a state of nature; either on land or in the sea. It has been said, and I have heard it asserted at Geneva, that there was nothing more than a distant analogy between those fossil remains which we see collected, and any existing

*This, which was considered as an original experiment at Geneva, was made by Dr. Priestly in 1794.

animals: this, if true, would imply, that there had been two distinct creations, a circumstance the more painful to Mr. de Luc and to his brother, as in their zeal for religion they have, rather unnecessarily I think, pledged themselves to prove the exact and literal truth of the Mosaick History.

I have as great a respect for this famous lawgiver as either of the Mess. de Lucs, and I admire his having conducted the moody, wrong-headed, murmuring race of his countrymen from slavery to liberty, in the midst of so many difficulties; but I am driven to let my reason take shelter in the supposition of allegory and metaphor, when I am called upon to declare my opinion of the most wonderful part of his narration, and might, I think, with propriety, apply what Rousseau rather improperly said of the miraculous part of the gospel: you, said he, addressing himself to a theologian, you are rendered a Christian by a belief in these miracles, now I am a Christian in spite of them. An interesting trait in the history of these venerable brothers, is the union of heart and mind in which they have ever lived, and the determination of each that the other should participate in any literary honour, or any credit that labour or ingenuity could procure the one in the opinion of mankind. Mr. Pictet, from whom I received the welcome of a friend on my return to this country, is among the most distinguished of the Genevans. The work of his of which I am best able to judge, contains a volume of letters, written during a rapid tour in England and Ireland; they contain a lively account of men and manners; of arts and sciences; of manufactures and agriculture; and show how much can be done in a very short time by a man of genius, who has activity; who is cheerful and good natured, and who possesses the language of the country through which he travels.

Medicine and surgery are practised in Geneva by individuals who rank high in those professions all over Europe; but there is one fault common to them all: they take it for granted, that a stranger is to pay more for the services he receives, than an inhabitant; and they embarrass him by refusing to make any demand, or give in any account; so that though he may in the end pay more than he ought, he has never the satisfaction of knowing that he has paid enough. There is something in this unworthy the dignity of a learned and highly useful profession, practised as it is at Geneva, by men of the most distinguished merit; and by no means consistent with the liberality of their conduct upon every other occasion. A Mr. Le S. a very eminent literary character, died a few days after my arrival at Geneva; his life, which was protracted to a good old age, had been in a great measure devoted to intense study; the great object of which was to explain mechanically, the operations of gravity. What the secondary causes are which occasion the fall of bodies, we shall never know with certainty; but those imagined by Mr. Le Sage would, I presume, be sufficient in the hands of a being enabled to wield them; it would appear so at least, as far as human knowledge has brought us acquainted with all the various phenomena of gravity upon earth, or in the Heavens: he was a man of a most benevolent heart; of great good humour, and of some singularities; these arose in a great measure, from his habit of classing his ideas, of deducing consequences upon all occasions from premises, and of taking nothing for granted, that he was not satisfied as to the truth of; his ingenious and active mind had been left in very early youth, from the circumstances of his situation and the mode of instruction his father had adopted, under the necessity of ruminating, where a slight explanation, had it been given, might have satisfied his doubts, and of making experiments, which he did with great ingenuity in order to satisfy himself on subjects of very ordinary occurrence; from these he passed to others far more

intricate, and was yet a young man when he decided a very important axiom in vision, and proved to the satisfaction of all who could understand him, that with power the mechanist might produce any sort of motion, and convert that which is recurring into that which shall be rotatory. His system on the explanation of gravity, was the great employment of his life; but it necessarily supposed a mass of information on various subjects, and this as well as the particulars of his hypothesis, he was at all times willing to communicate. But he could never acquire an easy flow of words, and would have been embarrassed by a very ordinary question, on which he had not been allowed to prepare himself. It was his misfortune to mistrust his memory, and commit every thing to paper. Attached as he was, almost unreasonably to truth, in all its rigour, and to extreme accuracy, it is singular that he should have bestowed so much of his attention upon subjects so inexhaustible and so remote from all possibility of being ever perfectly explained. He at one period of his life, fatigued his mind so long by endeavouring to ascertain the precise moment at which our waking faculties cease, and sleep commences, that he had almost lost the power of sleep. There is always a great deal of oral tradition in the accounts which are given us of any distinguished character, and this goes down to posterity, together with what assumes the appearance of history; it is already so with Mr. Le Sage, of whom a variety of anecdotes are related, in addition to what professour Prevost has published. He was fond of society it is said, but invariably took his solitary meal by his kitchen fire; and as he thought a certain degree of exercise necessary to health, and could not find time to walk out as often as he ought, it was his custom to dance a jig with his servant maid just before he went to bed. He was never married, nor does it appear that he ever was in love; but he had unaccountably taken up an idea, that the fair sex of his acquaintance, were always laying snares for his affections; and felicitated himself very gravely more than once, at having escaped temptations, which it is very certain never existed but in his own imagination. To believe the philosopher, Ulysses himself, never incurred more danger in the country of the Syrens, than he did in the virtuous city of Geneva. I do not mention this anecdote from any wish to excite a smile, but as a trait in the character of man in general, who is more frequently affected by what Dr. Johnson calls the flying clouds of incipient madness, than we commonly imagine; you will agree with me, that the mistake of the Genevan philosopher was not much less singular than that of the astronomer in Rasselas.—A Review, in the nature of those published in London, comes out once a month in Geneva; it is conducted by a society of men of letters, and exclusively appropriated to foreign, and particularly English productions. They very frequently discuss the subjects of the books they report upon, and throw light upon each; arranging whatever is confused; explaining whatever appears obscure, and pruning away all that is superfluous and redundant; so that an English authour is sometimes infinitely more improved by having passed through their hands, than his countrymen even are by their travels. They thus render no inconsiderable service to an authour, and to the portion of mankind who may be benefited by his labours. They were among the most zealous cooperators of Dr. Jenner, in promoting a confidence in the virtues of the vaccine inoculation, and contributed extremely to the success of this wonderful discovery, by explaining the process and symptoms. And now, ——————, I believe I must cease to write to you about Geneva, it is a topick upon which I could never exhaust myself, but your patience might not last as long; we are now preparing for our journey to Paris, and my next letter will be from thence.

For The Port Folio.

POLITE LITERATURE.

JUNIUS ONCE MORE.

——— Nov. 4, 1808.

Who was the authour of the letters signed JUNIUS?

They have been ascribed to *Burke*, to *Lord George Germaine*, to *Hugh Boyd*, to *Mr. Dunning*, and to a foreign clergyman of the name of *Rosenhagen*. In this country, some person has suggested the name of *Gen. Lee* as the authour; but they are attributed in England for the most part to *W. G. Hamilton*. I shall proceed to notice briefly the pretensions of each of these gentlemen: a newspaper dissertation will not admit of much detail.

The writers who have occasionally treated this question, Stephens, Malone, Chalmers, Heron, have not been very well qualified to do complete justice to it. Mere authours, criticks in black letter lore, like Stephens and Malone, may do well enough as verbal criticks, as illustrators of Shakspeare's dramas, but they had no adequate opportunity of mingling with the *political* world. For this is a mixed question; of elegant literature, and of the politicks of the day. As to Chalmers, an underwriter on British statisticks in Rose's office, however he may have earned the praise of patient industry in copying the entries of export and import, in editing treaties, or collecting tales of Daniel Defoe or Thomas Paine, he is certainly neither calculated by elegant erudition, or political information, to throw much light on this long agitated question.

The suggestion of *Boyd* rests chiefly I believe, upon the conjectures of Almon the bookseller; who certainly can only be authority so far as his informant was; for of his own knowledge it is not probable that Almon could give any information. Almon's shop, like that of his predecessour Debrett in Piccadilly, was a morning resort for literary loungers of the opposition-politicks, as Stockdale's was for the adherents of administration; and it is probable that Almon might be struck by some vague conjecture of Boyd having written the Letters of Junius, uttered in the desultory chit-chat of some of the whig politicians who frequented his counter. Heron, I fancy is the same person who published about twenty years ago a now-forgotten book, entitled "Letters on Literature," remarkable only for the affectation of paradox in the literary criticisms it contains. I remember at the time it was considered as a *nomme de guerre*, and the book was attributed to Pinkerton; whose pertinacity of assertion was then notorious. Heron's edition is certainly a good one, but I am fully persuaded that he is perfectly incompetent, from a want of political intercourse, to judge of the present question: indeed the Scotch literati, are not well versed in the anecdotical history of English authourship. Of Heron, since the "Letters" above mentioned, I have heard little or nothing in the literary world. He is *novus homo*, at least on these subjects. These remarks may appear peremptory and positive in this country, but I can risk them without danger to English amateurs of literary anecdote.

With respect to Burke as the supposed authour of *Junius*, I apprehend the pretension is not supportable. 1st, Burke's style is of all others the most unlike that of Junius: the one, diffuse, impetuous, glowing, metaphorical, coloured,

and ornamented in a high degree, exuberant in epithets, frequent in repeated ideas, with periods full, flowing, and rounded. The other, polished indeed, but sarcastick, epigrammatick. There is not a passage in Burke's known works, that can give the idea of Junius. There is not a passage in Junius impressed with the ardent energy of imagination so perpetually flashing through the pages of Burke's invective. 2dly, No man in Great Britain could be less disposed to panegyrise the mob-popularity of John Wilkes than Edmund Burke. Wilkes courted and cajoled the populace—Burke's motto was, *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo:* he never condescended to be of Wilkes's party, though he might oppose the unconstitutionality of his expulsion: if indeed in that country, John Wilkes's expulsion could fairly be considered as unconstitutional. 3rdly, Upon a question of party politicks, Burke was too open, too ardent for concealment: he had no motive for this kind of privacy: his opposition was uniformly to men superiour in mind as well as in political situation to the Duke of Grafton or his Grace of Bedford: and that opposition was in the face of the world. His posthumous editors indeed have been most disgracefully ashamed of one of his finest compositions, the "Vindication of Natural Society:" but Dodsley who repeatedly published it, and for whom Burke compiled the historical part of the old Annual Register, never concealed it. In my younger days its authour was never doubted: indeed who but Burke could have written it? Although it defends all the tenets of Paine—although it professes to imitate only the declamatory periods of Bolingbroke's style, yet it is manifestly impressed with the *vividi vis animi*, of Burke himself: for Bolingbroke's eloquence, though flowing, was comparatively cold and chastened, and did not exhibit like that of Burke "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." For these or some such reasons, the name of Mr. Burke has at present few advocates in its favour, as connected with that of Junius.

The political quid-nuncs of the day, the saunterers at Debrett's, were, for a long time suspicious that the Letters of Junius issued in some way or other from the office of LORD GEORGE GERMAINE: and the suspicion was not without some foundation, though I know of none to fix the authourship on Lord George himself. Cumberland, who was on very good terms with Lord George Germaine, tells us in his life (p. 338) that he once mentioned this report to his friend and patron, who smiled at it, but gave no reply in affirmance or denial. If Hamilton were the authour, I do not wonder at this silence: for Hamilton was under the patronage of Lord George, who was by no means friendly toward any of the subjects of Junius's abuse. But neither Hamilton nor Lord George could expect any favour or indeed any mercy from the court, as the defenders of John Wilkes, and the accusers of Lord Mansfield. Woodfall was deeply guarantied. Whatever general suspicion might exist, I know of no fact or anecdote that points particularly at Lord George Germaine; of whose literary talents we have no specimens to enable us to judge. That he was a man of ability, there is no doubt; but the affair of Minder was a millstone about his neck, and the opposition to his entrance into the House of Lords, sunk his spirits and paralysed his subsequent exertions.

Almon suggested Boyd as the authour: whose published works by no means justify such a conjecture. Boyd died in India, I believe at Calcutta, a few years ago, and I have heard him mentioned as the probable authour of Junius, in this country, by Mr. Duane, who appears to have known him in India. But I have received no fact as attaching to Boyd in this respect. It appears to me, conjecture not only devoid of foundation, but against all common probability. The Letters of Junius carry with them intrinsick evidence that they were written by a man conversant with the higher classes of society, and deeply versed in the private as well as the publick characters and views of the political leaders of the day: a man of elegant literature, too democratick, not for the publick, but for a court, and therefore if connected with a court interested in remaining unknown. A man evidently not tempted to acquire wealth by literary talent exerted in the field of politicks, and willing to sacrifice the love of fame to prudent obscurity. Which of these traits belongs to Boyd?—an adventurer of tolerable education and of good abilities, but no more. A man who could not be acted upon by motives of prudence in adopting voluntary obscurity, for his station in life could place him in no jeopardy. He had every motive to acquire if he could, either wealth or fame as a writer, for they were necessary to his comfort and consideration. Which then of the features belonging to Junius, belongs also to Boyd? What specimen of Boyd's style has been produced, that proves anything like a rival similarity to the style of Junius? And if there were any such in the few pages left by Boyd, how easily may a happy imitation of a favourite writer, be occasionally struck off by very inferiour talents? It is not merely the intrinsick neatness and sarcastick point; the bitter, deep-felt mordancy of Junius's style, that must stamp his merit as a writer—it is, that he was original at the time; his style was his own—Junius did not rank among the herd of imitators, *servum pecus*. He was the first, and he is as yet the last in his way: for unless some brilliant imitations of Junius's manner by Col. Francis, in his letters "of one of the People of Great Britian," there has been no copy of Junius worth a moment's attention. I agree with Lord Orford's friend, *Quicquid ostendas mihi sic, incredulus odi.*

Mr. Heron, attributes the Letters of Junius to Dunning. He could have known nothing of Dunning. I object to this supposition, 1st, That Junius declares expressly that he was not a lawyer by profession:—Dunning was. 2ndly, That Dunning was no writer: his practice was by far too extensive and incessant to admit of his appearing in the character of an authour. I know of no specimen of Dunning's composition. Junius must have been used to composition. He furnishes intrinsick evidence that he was in the habit of writing: his style too is polished, laboured, touched, and re-touched with great care. To me it bears strong marks of the *limæ labor*. He acknowledges this indeed, himself, in his letter to Horne: Dunning had no time for this. 3rdly, If he had time, Dunning was above it. Dunning was careless of ornament; his manner was singularly inelegant and repulsive; his diction fluent, but artless: his speeches were full of argument, strong and forcible, embracing all his subject, avoiding

no objections, betraying no art or management, meeting in their full force all his adversaries' reasonings. I have heard Dunning, at the Bar, and in the House. His dry cough incessantly interrupting the flow of his speeches—his figure diminutive and ungain—his manner void of action, standing obstinately erect, his hands resting unmoved below his breast, could never give the idea of anything approaching to elegance. Rapid he was, and forcible; occasionally witty, and pointed; but he was too good-tempered to be severe or sarcastick; much less was he like Junius, bitter and malignant. No tempers could be more opposite than those of Dunning and of Junius. 4th, Dunning did not care for the Court, I mean the Court of St. James's; to which, at that time he was in known and open opposition, nor was he in any fear of Lord Mansfield's influence, for his standing at the Bar, was not merely in the first rank in point of talents and practice, but he was the first in that rank. He led the Bar. Wallace and Bearcroft came after him, *longo intervallo*. He had no motive then for concealing himself, if he had been the authour of Junius, and Dunning was above concealment. He was as a lawyer, what Fox was as a politician. 5th, An argument of itself decisive with me, is that John Horne was the intimate, the valued friend of Dunning: and so continued, I believe till the death of Lord Ashburton. He has mentioned Dunning to me, in terms of so much respect and affection, that my feelings revolt at Dunning's being the authour of Junius to John Horne. Dunning and Horne were the confidential advisers of the Shelburne Club, with Col. Barrè, and that set of associated politicians. Dunning, Horne, Sergeant Glynor, and Barrè, were the managers of the city politicks of the day in conjunction; they were the political supporters, but not the personal friends of John Wilkes. Dunning was not only the private and political, but the loyal friend and adviser of John Horne. I refer to "Horne's Letter to Dunning." It was to Dunning that he dedicated this skeleton sketch of the *Epea Pteroenta;* a work that does honour to the nation; of unequalled ingenuity and research; a work that has placed Horne Tooke at the head of European literature. It was not this man that Dunning *could* have abused. I know Horne Tooke well: generous and kind-hearted as he is learned and able, he could not but have been the friend of Dunning, had they met, as they did. Horne Tooke could not have been the friend of Junius. If Mr. Heron were ignorant of these circumstances, he was unqualified to agitate the question: if he knew them, Dunning ought to have been the last of men to whom the Letters of Junius should be ascribed. The letters between Horne and Junius are full of passages which render Mr. Heron's conjecture to the highest degree improbable; in my mind, impossible. Heron has properly noticed, with great brevity, the foreigner ROSENHAGEN. No foreigner could have penned those Letters. He could have possessed neither the knowledge of character, nor the knowledge of the language that those Letters imply. And why should he conceal himself? Why should this obscure man renounce such a harvest of fame and fortune? The suggestion of such a name is almost as absurd as that of GENERAL LEE, of whom upon this question, no more need be said.

My opinion is, that the Right Honourable William Gerard Hamilton* was the authour: and the following authorities and considerations sway me.

1. I was too young at the time of Junius's publications in Woodfall's paper, to have any precise remembrance of the conjectures of the day. Between the years 1778 and 1792, I was much conversant with literary people, in London particularly, and elswhere in England. I have heard the question frequently stated, and occasionally discussed: but I have never heard those Letters attributed among the best informed people to any body but single-speech Hamilton. Not that any person to my knowledge, ever pretended to *know* who was the authour, but the general conjecture rested on him from a story commonly current, that one day in the House of Commons, he inquired of some of the members if they had read Junius's letter of that morning, and repeated a passage out of it. It happened, however, that in consequence of an accident at Woodfall's printing-office, his paper did not appear that day. The inference was, that nobody could know the contents of Junius's letter before it was published, but the authour of it.

2. In the latter part of the year 1792, I was on a visit to Horne Tooke at Wimbleton. We were alone. I asked him in the course of conversation if he knew who was the authour of Junius: he said, No: Whom do you suppose? I cannot suspect any one in particular, unless it be single-speech Hamilton. Horne Tooke was as likely to form a probable conjecture on the subject as any one.

3. Cumberland and Horace Walpole, appear to me of all the men in England, the best authority upon a question of this nature. Their forte, their mètier, their profession (particularly Lord Orford) was literary anecdote. It was chiefly on this account, that Cumberland, whose conversation-talents were much prized from ten to twenty years ago, was so welcome a guest in literary circles Beside this, both these gentlemen were intimately associated with the prominent political characters of that day, and therefore possessed in a high degree the two qualifications peculiarly required in this discussion.

Cumberland in his Life (New-York ed. p. 109) has the following among other passages relating to W. G. Hamilton. "The speech of the lord-lieutenant upon the opening of the Session is upon record. It was generally esteemed a very brilliant composition. His graceful person, and impressive manner of delivery, set it off to the best advantage, and all things seemed to augur well for his success. When I was called in jointly with Secretary Hamilton to take the project and rough copy of this speech into consideration, I could not help remarking the extraordinary efforts which that gentleman made, to engraft his own very pecular style on the sketch before him. In this I sometimes agreed with him, but more generally opposed him: till Lord Halifax, whose patience began to be exhausted, no

* This gentleman died at his house in Upper Brook-street, Grosvenor-Square, on July 16, 1796; aged 69. About the year 1760 he was appointed Chief-Secretary to the Earl of Halifax, who was sent over as lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Cumberland, the dramatick writer, was at the same time Ulster-Secretary to that Nobleman. I believe Hamilton afterward was Secretary to Lord George Germaine, when the latter came into office. He was remarkable as a member of the House of Commons, for making but one speech in a Session, but that was always an able one.

longer submitted his copy to be dissected, but took it to himself with such alterations as he saw fit to adopt, and those but few. I must candidly acknowledge, that at times when I have heard people searching for internal evidence in the style of Junius, as to the authour of those famous letters, I have called to recollection this circumstance which I have now related, and occasionally said that the style of Junius bore a strong resemblance to what I had observed of the style of Secretary Hamilton. Beyond this I never had the least grounds for conjecture, nor any clue to lead me to the discovery of that anonymous writer beyond what I have alluded to."

I know too that my long and much-esteemed friend Richard Sharpe, Esq. to whose literary judgment, Cumberland has shown such prudent deference, entertains the same opinion: and his opinions respecting English authours, and on subjects of English literature, has no slight weight among the literary circles of the British metropolis.

The editor of the Walpoliana (p. 49) gives the following anecdote, as related by Lord Orford:

"I was informed by Sir John Irwine, that one day when he was at Mr. Grenville's, Mr. G. told Sir John, that he had that morning received a letter from Junius, saying, that he esteemed Mr. G. and might soon make himself known to him. This affords me proof positive that the celeorated authour of those Letters could not be Mr. *Grenville's* secretary, as was supposed. I really suspect single-speech Hamilton to have been the authour, from the following circumstance: One day at a house where he happened to be, he repeated the contents of that day's Junius, while in fact, the printer had delayed the publication till next day.' (This probably alludes to the same mistake which I have already noticed, as commonly spoken of in literary circles in my time. Hamilton might have mentioned the same thing both at a private house and at the House of Commons.) "Hamilton," says Walpole, "was also brought forward by Lord Holland, and it is remarkable that Lord Holland, though very open to censure, is never once mentioned. Garrick dining with me one day, told me, that having been at Woodfall's, he learnt that the Junius of that day would be the last; upon this, hurrying to St. James's he reported this intelligence to several people. Next day he received a letter from Junius informing him that if he used such freedoms, a letter from Junius to him should appear. From this Garrick concluded that the authour was about the Court."

To these testimonies of Cumberland and Walpole, I will add another, not inferiour in weight of authority. The autl.our of the "Pursuits of Literature" pedant as he is, will be regarded as no mean judge in questions depending upon literary anecdote. In p. 19, of the Philad. edit. of his "Imperial Epistle from Kien-Long to George the Third," is this note:

"Junius: there is a person now living emphatically styled on the highest authority, THE MAN WITH THE PEN. *Note communicated by the Right Honourable W. G. Hamilton, M. P.*"

This epistle I believe was first published in 1795. W. G. Hamilton died in 1796.

These are all the remarks that I am at present prepared to offer on this *diu vexator questio*. But I think the current anecdote of Hamilton's premature quotation from Junius, aided by the conjectures of

such men as Tooke, Walpole, Cumberland, Sharpe, and the authour of the Pursuits of Literature, furnish much stronger ground in favour of my supposition, than any other hypothesis can call in aid. The question is not indeed of much importance, but it is one of those that the lovers of fine writing, will feel to a certain degree interested in resolving. If the preceding speculations are likely to afford amusement to your readers, you are welcome to them.

C.

For The Port Folio.

Life of Dr. Johnson.

(*Concluded from page* 347.)

He published his Shakspeare in 1765, and shortly after the University of Dublin created him a Doctor of Laws: the University of Oxford followed the example ten years afterwards, and till that period he never assumed his title. In 1766 his constitution seemed to be in a rapid decline, and the morbid melancholy to which he had always been a victim, then came upon him with redoubled force. About this time Mr. and Mrs. Thrale paid him a visit and found him on his knees with Dr. Delap, beseeching God to continue him in the use of his understanding.

From 1766 till the year 1775, we find him engaged in no very material literary avocations. He was much in the habit of writing Prefaces and Introductions to the works of various authours. He passed much of his time at Streatham, the residence of Mr. Thrale; and in 1776 he removed to a larger house in Bolt-Court, where the whole of the second floor was fitted up for his library, which now consisted of 5000 volumes. Miss Williams partook of his new mansion; and he also gave apartments to Mrs. Desmoulins, daughter of his godfather Dr. Swinfen, and her daughter, a Miss Carmichael. Such likewise was his generosity, that he allowed Mrs. Desmoulins half a guinea a week out of his pension. Yet Johnson used to observe to Mrs. Piozzi, that from the dissentions of his inmates they made his life miserable, by the impossibility he found of making theirs happy.

Among the constant visitors of Dr. Johnson was Robert Levett, an obscure practitioner of medicine.—He had scarcely sufficient practice to keep him from starving, but Johnson had such a high opinion of his abilities that he always consulted him, and declared "he was hardly able to live without him." He also gave this man an apartment in his house, in which he continued for the rest of his life. The figure and manner of Levett exactly resembled those of Johnson; and when nearly sixty years of age he married a common street walker, who persuaded him that she was a woman of family and fortune. This man was highly remarkable for the tenderness and gratitude which he always showed towards his benefactor.

In August 1773, he set out on his journey to Scotland, in company with Mr. Boswell, and returned to London in November. His various adventures during his tour have been well described by Mr. Boswell in his journal. In 1774, he published a political pamphlet, entitled, The Patriot; and in 1775, another, called, Taxation no Tyranny; as well as the Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland. His first publication of the Lives of the Poets was in 1779, and in 1781, he completed this work, which in his seventy-first year closed his literary labours. It was this work which contributed to immortalize his name, and procured him that rational esteem which was not diminished even by the injudicious zeal of his friends.

On the 4th of May, 1781, he lost his valuable friend Mr. Thrale, who appointed him one of his executors, with a legacy of 200*l*. He has given a true character of this gentleman in a Latin Epitaph, which is to be seen in the church at Streatham. By the

loss of Mr. Thrale, Johnson was deprived of many of the comforts of his life; and his visits becoming less agreeable at Streatham, he took his final leave of Mrs. Thrale in April 1783, after a connexion of nearly twenty years. It appears from the anecdotes of Mrs. Piozzi, (formerly Mrs. Thrale,) that her politeness to Johnson was principally in consequence of an habitual yoke imposed upon her by her husband. "Veneration," says she, "for his virtues, reverence for his talents, and an habitual endurance of which my husband bore his share for seventeen years, made me go on so long with Mr. Johnson; but the perpetual confinement I will own to have been terrifying in the first years of our friendship, and irksome in the last, nor would I pretend to support it when my coadjutor was no more." Previous to her marriage with the Italian musick-master, Johnson sent her a severe remonstrance, on her intimation of her intentions, which she answered by an indignant vindication of her conduct.

From this time the malady with which Johnson had been afflicted throughout his life, came upon him with redoubled violence, and his strength daily declined. In June 1783, he was afflicted with a parylitick stroke, which deprived him at first of his speech, but which he gradually recovered, so that in July he was able to pay a visit to Mr. Langton, at Rochester. He afterwards went to Mr. Bowles, at Hale, in Wiltshire, and during his visit Miss Williams expired. This, as he was ever agitated with the dread of his own dissolution, gave his mind a considerable shock; and he declared that his prospect of death was terrible.

In November 1783, he was attacked by a dropsy, in consequence of which he was swelled from head to foot: from this complaint however, he was relieved, and began to entertain hopes that his constitution was not entirely decayed. At Midsummer, 1784, he seemed in a state of convalescence, and went into Derbyshire to recover his strength by a change of air. During his absence he conceived that his life might be prolonged by his removal to a warmer climate, and the Lord Chancellor undertook to recommend his case, with a view to obtain an addition to his pension, but he was unsuccessful, and though he offered to advance 500*l.* towards his travelling expenses, from his own private purse, and Dr. Brocklesby also offered him an annuity of 100*l.* the Doctor thought proper to reject both these liberal proposals, and returned to London in November, seriously afflicted with an asthma and the dropsy.

He now felt his end approaching; and the strength of religion prevailed over the infirmity of nature. He no longer dreaded the sentence of divine justice, but maintained a humble and pious hope of mercy. On the evening of Monday, December the 13th, 1784, he expired without a groan: and on the 20th his remains were deposited in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakspeare's monument, and contiguous to the grave of Garrick. His schoolfellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, read the funeral service, and agreeably to his desire, a large blue flag stone was placed over his grave, with the following inscription:

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.
Obiit XIII Decembris,
Anno Domini
M.DCC.LXXXIV.
Ætatis suæ LXXV.

A monument has since been erected to his memory in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. He left the bulk of his property, amounting to about 1500*l.* to his faithful black servant, Francis Barber, and appointed Sir John Hawkins and Sir William Scott, his executors.

The death of Dr. Johnson excited the attention of the publick in an extraordinary degree, and the press teemed with literary effusions to his memory, in the form of Sermons, Elegies, Memoirs, Lives, Essays and Anecdotes. Those most distinguish-

ed were the Essay, by Samuel Hobhouse, Esq. and the "Political and Literary Review of Dr. Johnson's Character," by John Courtenay, Esq. M. P. but particularly the instructing and interesting Life of Johnson, by James Boswell, Esq. which appeared in two quarto volumes, in the year 1791.

The person of Dr. Johnson was large and unwieldy; the disease of the scrophula affected his nerves, and his head and frame were subject to involuntary motions. He manifested on all occasons an independent spirit, which rendered him incessantly irritable, and carried his haughty temper beyond all bounds; while the habit of pronouncing decisions to friends and visitors, caused him to adopt a dictatorial manner, which was much enforced by a voice naturally loud and strong. His favourite topicks of discussion were, metaphysicks, moral and religious systems, literary anecdotes, but particularly biographical accounts of learned men. He however had an aversion from general history and antiquities, and would even be rude to the person who introduced those subjects in conversation.

There is no doubt that the great trait in Johnson's mind was gigantick vigour. He was born a logician, and loved argumentation, while he argued with such profound investigation, that a fallacy was sure to be refuted by his strength of reasoning. It is also certain that with great powers of mind he possessed a considerable share of wit and humour; though he does not seem to have been able in conversation to command his passions.

In his political principles he was a staunch Tory, and was inimical to all men of Whig opinions, though the shades of his character have been greatly misrepresented by party writers. His humanity, generosity, and general philanthropy were unbounded; and it has been justly observed, that in his house the lame, the blind and the sorrowful found a sure retreat. He always considered a strict adherence to truth as a sacred obligation, and in relating the most trivial anecdote he would not allow himself the smallest addition in the way of embellishment. In short, his veracity was so rigid that Mr. Tyers, who was well acquainted with his manner, was accustomed to observe that he conversed as if he was talking upon oath.

Dr. Johnson's failings, when contrasted with his virtues, sink into insignificance, and may be compared to specks on the sun. His piety and goodness of heart form a noble subject for imitation, his works will always remain a monument of genius and erudition; and by a diligent attention to them every mind may advance in virtue.

We shall conclude this sketch by a quotation from Horace, which may be considered as Johnson's picture in miniature.

"Iracundior est paulo minus aptus acutis
Naribus horum hominum, rideri possit eo quod
Rusticius tonso toga defluit, et male laxus
In pede calceus hæret. At est bonus ut melior vir
Non alius quisquam; at tibi amicus, at ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore...."

MERRIMENT.

M. de la Farre had long possessed an affection for Madame de la Sabbere. Visiting her one morning, and fixing his eyes steadily on her countenance, he suddenly exclaimed, "Bless me, what is the matter with your right eye?" "Ah! la Farre," replied she, "you no longer love me, I have had the same defect my whole life, but passion blinded you too much to discover it till this day."

The price of the Port Folio is Six Dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

Printed and Published, for the Editor, by SMITH & MAXWELL,

NO. 28, NORTH SECOND-STREET.